

Census 2021 - The Welsh Language

Welsh Speakers

Wales

The latest Census data for 2021 indicates that an estimated 538,300 people (aged 3+) in Wales are able to speak Welsh, this translates to 17.8% of the population. This is a decrease of approximately 23,700 people or 1.2 percentage points³ since the 2011 Census.

The only local authorities in Wales that have seen increases in the numbers of people able to speak Welsh are Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil.

Carmarthenshire

The latest Census data for 2021 indicates that Carmarthenshire is home to 72,838 Welsh speakers. This translates to 39.9% of the county's total population⁴.

This figure has decreased by 5,210 since the last Census in 2011, which translates to a percentage point decrease of 4.0. This is the largest percentage point decrease of all local authorities in Wales.

In 2001 and 2011, Carmarthenshire had the highest number of Welsh speakers of all local authorities in Wales, with 84,196 and 78,048 Welsh speakers respectively. These new figures mean that the county now has the second highest number of Welsh speakers of all local authorities in Wales. Carmarthenshire remains the fourth highest in terms of the percentage of the population that are able to speak Welsh.

Age Group

All local authorities saw a decrease in the percentage of children aged 3 to 15 reported as being able to speak Welsh between 2011 and 2021.

At a national level it is thought that the decrease in both the number and percentage of people aged three years or older able to speak Welsh is mainly driven by a fall among children and young people who reported as being able to speak Welsh.

In Carmarthenshire the numbers of those aged 3-15 able to speak Welsh has decreased by 510 people, this translates to a percentage point decrease of 2.6.

Decreases have also been visible within the 16-64 and 65+ age categories although at more significant levels than the younger age group. To expand, the decline in those aged over 65 able to speak to Welsh translates to a percentage point decrease of 8.7.

Welsh Language Skills

74,355 people living in the county reported that they have no skills in Welsh during the 2011 Census. This level has increased over the last ten years to 85,287 or 4.8 percentage points.

The number of people able to speak, read and write Welsh in the county has decreased by 1.9 percentage points or 1,828 people. This is a considerably lower decrease than the figures for those only able to speak Welsh.

³ Percentage points relate to the difference between two percentages. In this case we are referring to the differences between percentages which indicate the proportion of the population that are able to speak Welsh

⁴ Those aged 3+